

TIPS FOR IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON THE HSAP



STUDENTS

- Keep up with your studies.
- Focus on one question at a time during testing.
- Read the directions and questions carefully.
- Try to answer all questions. You will not be penalized for guessing.
- Skip a question if you do not know the answer. Come back to the question after you finish the rest of the test.
- Realize that easier and more difficult questions are scattered throughout the test. Do not be discouraged if you find some of the first questions difficult.
- Go back and check your answers when you finish.

PARENTS

- Encourage your child to get plenty of rest and eat a well-balanced diet.
- Monitor your child's progress throughout the year.
- Remember that test scores are only one measure of a student's achievement.
- Support your child's academic efforts.
- Avoid scheduling appointments or vacations during testing week.



TEACHERS

- Reinforce the content standards on an ongoing basis.
- Prepare students for the HSAP tests through daily instruction. Standards should be taught not in isolation but through curriculum integration within a content area and across multiple content areas.
- Give students opportunities to respond to constructed-response and extended-response questions throughout the school year. Students who have an opportunity to work with scoring rubrics and to discuss them in class will be more aware of the characteristics of an ideal response.



HSAP

South Carolina
High School Assessment Program

OVERVIEW

The South Carolina High School Assessment Program (HSAP) consists of two tests—one in English language arts and one in mathematics—that are administered to public high school students in South Carolina under the requirements of state and federal laws. South Carolina law mandates that all public school students pass an exit examination as one requirement for receiving a high school diploma. Federal law mandates that states assess public high school students' academic achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics.

THE BASIC FACTS

What does the HSAP assess?

The HSAP tests are based on the South Carolina curriculum standards in English language arts and mathematics. These tests assess what students are expected to know and be able to do in each subject. More specific information about the content tested in the HSAP is given in the next section of this brochure.

Who takes the HSAP tests?

All public school students will take the HSAP tests for the first time in the second spring after their initial enrollment in the ninth grade, with one exception: students who cannot participate in the HSAP with accommodations or modifications will take the South Carolina Alternate Assessment (SC-Alt). The student's individualized education program (IEP) team makes the determination as to whether he or she meets the state criteria for alternate assessment.

What are the requirements for a high school diploma?

Students must earn the Carnegie units that are required by their school district and by the state and must pass the South Carolina exit examination to receive a high school diploma. Passing both the HSAP English language arts test and the HSAP mathematics test fulfills the exit examination requirement.

What is the passing score for HSAP?

The mathematics and English language arts tests each have four achievement levels: 1, 2, 3, and 4. A student must score at level 2 or higher on each test to meet the graduation requirement. Students who score at level 2 or higher on either test will not need to take that test again.

What happens when students do not pass the HSAP?

Students who score at level 1 on either test will be scheduled to retake the test at the next administration.

How do HSAP requirements apply to students with disabilities or limited English proficiency?

Students with disabilities use the testing accommodations and modifications specified in their IEPs or 504 accommodation plans. Students who meet the state criteria for alternate assessment and who are fifteen years of age on September 1 of the current school year will take the SC-Alt. Students with limited English proficiency may use the testing accommodations addressed in the *HSAP Test Administration Manual*.

How much time do students have to take the HSAP tests?

The HSAP tests are given over a period of three days—two sessions for English language arts and one session for mathematics. The HSAP tests are not timed. Students are given as much time as they need to complete each session on each test day.

For what other purposes are the HSAP scores used?

HSAP scores are combined to produce school and district performance data that are published each year on the state report card. HSAP scores are also used to calculate and report each school or district's status of adequate yearly progress (AYP).

Where can one find additional information about the HSAP?

For more information on the HSAP, go online to the Department of Education's Web site at <http://www.ed.sc.gov> or contact your school. On the Web site you will find the test blueprints, scoring information, and sample test questions.

**CONTENT AREAS ASSESSED BY THE HSAP:
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS**

Expectations. The expectations listed here, which are based on the content strands specified by the South Carolina curriculum standards, describe what students should be able to do when taking the HSAP tests. Students should be able to demonstrate the skills specified below.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading: *The student should be able to*

- integrate various cues and strategies to comprehend what he or she reads
- use knowledge of the purposes, structures, and elements of writing to analyze and interpret text
- apply knowledge of word analysis strategies to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading material and use them correctly

Writing: *The student should be able to*

- write for a variety of purposes

Research: *The student should be able to*

- select a topic for exploration, gather information from a variety of sources, and use a variety of strategies to prepare and present the information

MATHEMATICS

Number and Operations: *The student should be able to*

- understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers, and number systems
- compute with rational numbers and make reasonable estimates in applied situations

Algebra: *The student should be able to*

- understand and apply patterns, relations, and functions
- represent, analyze, and model situations using mathematical structures and algebraic symbols

Measurement and Geometry: *The student should be able to*

- apply appropriate techniques, tools, and formulas to determine measurements and solve problems
- analyze characteristics and properties of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes, understand geometric relationships, and apply spatial relationships using coordinate geometry

Data Analysis and Probability: *The student should be able to*

- use appropriate statistical methods to analyze data and apply basic concepts of probability

Mathematical Processes: *The student should be able to*

- use the process standards of problem solving, communication, representations, and connections to apply a solution strategy and communicate and represent the result

TYPES OF TEST ITEMS and ALLOWED TEST-TAKING AIDS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Multiple-Choice Items. The student is required to select one of four choices to answer questions that are based on the content areas of reading, writing, and research.

Constructed-Response Items. The student is required to respond with written answers to reading questions. One lined page is provided for each answer, but the student does not have to fill the page to get a top score.

Extended-Response Item. The student is required to write a comprehensive composition in response to a given prompt. Three lined pages are provided for the answer. The student does not have to fill all three pages to get a top score but should write enough to demonstrate his or her best writing.

Test Aids. For the extended-response item only, the student is allowed to use a dictionary, a thesaurus, and scratch paper to write a rough draft. The school provides these aids; they are collected at the end of the test.

MATHEMATICS

Multiple-Choice Items. The student is required to select one of four choices to answer questions that are based on the content strands of number and operations, algebra, measurement and geometry, and data analysis and probability.

Constructed-Response Items. These items require that students show their work and/or write an explanation to support their answers. The student must apply the process standards across the content strands of number and operations, algebra, measurement and geometry, and data analysis and probability.

Test Aids. Along with the test booklet, each student is given a reference sheet with formulas and a sheet of graph paper for scratch work. These aids are collected at the end of the test. Students may use calculators during the test; however, the test items are not designed to require a calculator. Contact your school for more information about the use of calculators during the HSAP mathematics test, or go online to the Department of Education's Web site at <http://www.ed.sc.gov>.